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Adoption Day makes happy Thanksgiving

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Editor

ST. JOHNS — Thanksgiving was a little extra special for 14 mid- Michigan children from 10 different families.

The children, on Nov. 22, officially became part of their "forever families," to use Judge Lisa Sullivan's words.

November is Adoption Month. As part of the month-long focus on adoption and foster parenting, the Tuesday before Thanksgiving is designated as Adoption Day. In numerous courtrooms around the state adoptions were finalized.

In Family Court in St. Johns, 14 children, ranging in age from six months to 13 years, became permanent members of their families. The types of adoptions were as varied as the children and families experiencing them.

There were single-mother adoptions, grandparent adoptions, stepparent adoptions and special needs adoptions.

There were department of human services adoptions, private adoptions and support adoptions. What they all had in common was the sense of belonging and permanency provided to the children and parents.

"It is just the best day of the year," said Sullivan. "To look out and see the looks on all those happy faces and to know what they have gone through to reach this point ... There is just nothing else like it."

Some of the adoptive parents are also foster parents.



(Photo by Sue Lounds)

LANDON'S FOREVER FAMILY — With the finalization of his adoption, Landon Pung now has a "forever family," to use Judge Lisa Sullivan's words. Landon, six months, joins six-yearold brother Dakota and parents Bob and Nikki Pung of Fowler to make a big, happy family.

Stephen and Darla Plumbley of Elsie just adopted Eric, 3. He was their foster son first. He has been with them for half of his life. The Plumbleys have a biological daughter named Izoa who is about 2 and another child on the way. They hope to adopt other children in the future, because they see the importance of foster parenting.

"I think that being that we are foster parents, we want people to know if anyone is able and decides to adopt, that is wonderful," Stephen said, "but there is also a great need for foster parents. More people should consider it."

Following the adoption ceremonies, a reception for the large group of adoptive families and their support networks took place. There were many smiles, many tears of joy and maybe relief and much anticipation of a wonderful Thanksgiving with new and special reasons to give thanks.

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